

Happy Emailing Reader-Friendly Emails Video Transcript

- We're all busy, distracted, and short on time. That's why easily skimmed and digested emails have higher response rates. Here are some tips to format your emails in a reader-friendly manner. First, avoid all caps. Readers hear your voice when they read your email messages. If the text is in all caps, they literally hear you yelling in their minds as they read your message. So, it comes across as hostile. Need another reason to skip the all caps? Spell check doesn't catch errors written in uppercase because it assumes you're keying in acronyms or words with nontraditional spelling. And, because it's harder to read, you'll easily miss the typos too. Second, don't use red font if you need to call your readers' attention to something. If you're responding, say, to questions inline, highlight your response in yellow and then use italics or bold. Red fonts are read as hostile and can have different meanings in other cultures. For example, writing a person's name in red ink is associated with death in Korean culture. Are you thinking, "Okay Daisy, I'll use blue or green" then? Well, that might be hard to read for someone who's colorblind, and these changes don't always show up on mobile devices. This is why I recommend using the highlight and italics features together when you're responding inline. Third, keep your sentences and paragraphs short. Remember, this is an email, not a thesis. If you find your content is long, use bulleted lists to make it easier for your reader follow. Remember, people are reading your messages on a variety of devices, from smartwatches to large screens. Resist the urge to tell the reader everything you know about the topic and just tell them what they need to know. Which brings me to another important point. Is all of the content you've included in your message related? If not, consider sending a separate email. By limiting the subjects of your messages, you help your readers stay focused on the key topic of your message. If you decide to keep the content together in one email, use bold subject headings to break up the sections or paragraphs in your message. This gives your reader a bit of road map for your message and helps them refer back to specific sections when needed. Stick to these tips and I promise you won't end up being that person who makes your colleagues roll their eyes when they see your name in their inbox.